

**DANBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2021 - 7:00 PM
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM
LIVE STREAM**

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
DANBURY TOWN CLERK

FEB 17 2021 3²⁰P

BY: 

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chairperson, G. Cooper, called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and those assembled recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Joseph Britton, Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Loren Daly, Joseph DaSilva, Kathryn Hodgdon, Richard Jannelli, Kathleen Molinaro, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino
Absent: n/a
Also Present: Dr. Pascarella, Courtney Leborious, Kelly Truchsess, Kevin Walston, Dr. Casimiro, Kim Thompson

CONSENT CALENDAR

EXHIBIT

MOTION: K. Conetta moved, seconded by J. DaSilva that the Board of Education approve the item on the Consent Calendar, Exhibit 21-09, as recommended:

MINUTES

1/13/21 Regular Meeting

21-09 (pg.4)

11 Votes Yes: Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly, Joseph Britton, Richard Jannelli

Motion carried at 7:05 pm

EDUCATIONAL STAFF REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

- DSAA: Dr. Kristy Zaleta, President
 - There aren't enough minutes in the Board meeting to fully express the amount of work that has been done, and continues to be done, to support not only the Hybrid Model but also the large percentage of students that remain on full Distance Learning. There isn't a staff member in DPS that hasn't gone above and beyond for their students. In an effort to shed a little light on what has been going on in the background, Dr. Zaleta collected information from all three levels and compiled the highlights into four categories.
 - Preparation:
 - Created reopening committees with teachers, administrators, support staff and nurses to plan for the Hybrid Opening.

- Collaborated with the Central Office and custodial staff to prepare the classrooms for the students' return with PPE, hand sanitizer, wipes, etc. Worked to hire additional help for some of the large buildings.
- Set up parents and students in PowerSchool.
- Organized logistically how students would enter, transition, pick up food, eat the food safely, and how to get them to safely leave the building.
- Administrative team worked with the tech department to develop how students were going to be able to engage in classes when there were more kids online than in person.
- Spoke with colleagues from other districts and states to see what was working for them and what to avoid.
- Created innumerable staff duty lists, plans to cover arrival and dismissal of students, classroom logs, sub coverage, bus lists and contact tracing.
- Having a feedback loop with staff has personally been of the utmost importance - as we move through the process we constantly look at how we can improve on what we planned?
- Communication:
 - Has been a key ingredient to helping parents process and plan for what is happening and what has changed.
 - Educating parents about the program choices, the schedules for each program, mitigation strategies in the building and what to expect. Have done this through morning announcements, virtual town halls/parent meetings that are recorded and shared on YouTube, school websites, and weekly update emails.
 - Spent time communicating with students through training on Digital citizenship and COVID-19 protocols.
- Student Engagement & Family Outreach:
 - Home visits.
 - Tech boot camp.
 - Lunch Bunch/Night events with students to discuss events going on in the world as well as fun game nights - Kahoot!, Among Us, Name that Tune, Story time with their teachers.
 - Extracurricular Clubs.
 - Provided meals for students - not only the breakfast and lunch school meals but have worked with families to provide fresh groceries and non-perishables.
 - At BVMS, they have a food pantry where people can donate non-perishable food that is delivered to families.
 - At RPMS there is a Meal Train that has raised over \$17,000 and have been providing almost 200 food insecure families with a week's worth of fresh groceries.
 - Holiday Giving Trees - in addition to the NEA Holiday Bear

- Lessons Learned/ Disruptive Innovation:
 - The exponential increase in both teacher's and administrators' capacity to determine quality online programs/tools as well as utilize them effectively to enhance what happens in a classroom.
 - Have been able to do this because staff have had the opportunity to do in-time, embedded, ongoing PD for teachers.
 - Another big win was Virtual Parent meetings/conferences - opened doors for parents that couldn't always make it to the in-person event.
 - Another big win in this disruptive innovation - Students have become advocates for themselves by reaching out to ask for help and clarifying questions.
- On behalf of all DPS administrators, Dr. Zaleta gave a heartfelt thank you to the myriad of parents who have reached out to administrators individually to say thank you, to send an email complimenting what an amazing job their child's teacher has been doing, acknowledging the effort put into the planning process and the communication, sharing their gratitude for the time spent in Google Meets helping them navigate new terrain.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

- ACE Representatives: Chris Johnston
 - On 1/26/2021, the 11th graders at ACE were offered the opportunity to re-enter the ACE building to take the PSAT. Thanks to D. Dinardo for arranging and proctoring the test.
 - On 2/1/2021, ACE will run a structured Orientation Day to deliver expectations for attendance and course schedules, behavioral norms, and social emotional learning activities. Time will also be spent going over mitigation strategies and safety procedures. Students will follow the orientation day schedule with their guidance groups to continue the process of building community as we re-enter the building in semester two following the Hybrid Model. The Orientation Day will also be an opportunity for guidance teachers and guidance members to welcome the incoming students from DHS.
 - ACE would like to publicly acknowledge and congratulate the three January Graduates: Brian Galarza, Rachel Jackson, and Carter Stroh. The three January graduates will be invited to participate in the June graduation. We look forward to hearing their speeches which will also be viewable on our Alternative Center for Excellence YouTube channel.
 - ACE would like to congratulate the most recent Student of the Week award winners: Jaylyn Batista and Spencer Robbins. Congratulations to both of you and keep up the great work!

ACTION ITEMS

A. December 2020 Operating Results and Analysis (General Funds/Grant Projects)

MOTION: R. Chaleski moved, seconded by K. Conetta that the Board of Education approve the December 2020 Operating Results and Analysis (General Funds/Grant Projects) in accordance with

21-10(pg.17)

11 Votes Yes: Rachel Chaleski, Kate Conetta, Gladys Cooper, Joseph DaSilva, Albert Russo, Amy Spallino, Kathryn Hodgdon, Kathleen Molinaro, Loren Daly, Joseph Britton, Richard Jannelli

Motion carried at 7:20 pm

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- C. Leborious spoke about the budget report.
 - At the last Board meeting it was discussed that there was a deficit that now shows an imbalance. That is as a result of some items in the last budget presentation that were grant funded and that are now shifted over to the appropriate place in the budget.
 - When closed last fiscal year, there was a reduction from original ask and we braided funding together. The BOE amount is about \$136 million but the total braided funding was about \$145 million. For the next Board meeting there will be a full accounting of the \$145 million.
 - Tuesday Finance Committee meeting to kick off discussions of the budget cycle. Calendar invitations will be sent to members.
 - Shortfall with the school nutrition program. Sodexo has come up with strategies to get more food out to the community. Because we have been fully remote until recently, the food count is down. We are reimbursed by the federal government with the number of meals that we distribute. Our gap right now is about \$1 million. Danbury has been a hot spot and remote for so long it's a bit exacerbated.
 - Sodexo came up with a strategy to pair up with the bus company to get food out to families. They have a strategy going forward to reduce that gap. One of the things they are doing is getting a week's worth of staple food. On Wednesdays, buses will deliver a week's worth of meals to families that sign up. This information will be sent to the community shortly. There will also be a week worth of staple food pickup in the evening. Working out logistics from 4 - 6 pm likely at Park Avenue School. Will continue at DHS and BVMS from 8 am to 11 am. Will monitor and assess how to get food out to the community as it is needed. Will report regularly to the Board.
 - That gap will be met with reserve funds from last year, about \$2.6 million. If we can not close the gap with all these strategies, we will have to take funds from that reserve. The goal is to not do that as we need the reserve funds for operating and one time expenses.
 - Students are back in school and eating regular meals so the hope is to close that gap.
 - J. DaSilva asked how the food distribution has been so far for hybrid homes and DL students with food only at BVMS and DHS, in regards to transportation? C. Leborious stated that she has to survey the community and reach out to principals. We see that numbers are good at schools but in terms of reaching families who can not drive to BVMS and DHS she has to get feedback from principals. Less than 40% of students are in school. Looking at potentially expanding to additional locations. Asked if the Board hears feedback please let her know.

- J. DaSilva stated that current distribution from 9-11am for a parent to pick up the food is difficult. If the student is in virtual class at that time, they have to leave the child home alone or take them with them. Maybe doing it in the afternoon or night, when classes are over, would be better.
- R. Chaleski stated that she was expecting a presentation at this Board meeting to be able to vote at the next meeting. C. Leborious stated that we will vote at the next meeting. The first Finance Committee meeting will be on 2/2/2021 and will hold as many meetings as needed until the Board is comfortable with the budget. Vote will be held on the Board meeting of 2/10/2021 in order to meet the city deadline. City deadline is 2/15/2021.
- R. Chaleski asked if the 2/2/2021 meeting could be a workshop so Board members could ask questions? Also asked for the budget to be sent to Board members so they can review prior to the meeting.
- C. Leborious stated that the committee has met with the Cabinet and refined the ask and it will be shared shortly with Board members. Board members can reach out to C. Leborious if they have specific questions so she can include them in the presentation.
- R. Jannelli stated that considering time constraints, a workshop would be important so Board members can ask questions and be fully informed.
- G. Cooper stated that there will be a discussion before it is turned into a workshop.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that at some point, a workshop post the budget would be beneficial as well. We are trying to understand the funds that are coming from the federal government in terms of how it will mitigate our costs. There is a disparity of kindergarteners who have not arrived in the year and are working on figuring out our FTEs.
- Vaccine Distribution Update
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that the vaccine has been disturbing in terms of the rollout. Late on 2/21/2021, the vaccine was pulled off the docket and paused. That pause took out our staff opportunity to receive the vaccine. Some districts were able to circumvent the requirement through their health department and were able to vaccinate their teachers. Has been quite controversial how that happened.
 - Dr. Pascarella met with legislators and senator on 1/27/2021. Dr. Pascarella would like to have a conversation with the state department to consider cities, such as Danbury that have had high numbers of community spread, to be prioritized and permitted to be vaccinated sooner.
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that if we lay it out the way the State is going, our staff may not be able to get vaccinated until the Spring.
 - K. O'Dowd stated the State is continuing to vaccinate under 1A and moved on to individuals 75 of age and older. School personnel have been put on pause due to the vaccine supply. From week to week the local health department has not always known how many vaccines they would be able to get. All directions will come from the State. The district or local health department have no control of who is eligible or enrolled next. As soon as the State gives us the direction, there is someone who will be responsible for uploading the list into the system and then

individuals will receive an invitation to set up an account and schedule their vaccine.

- K. O'Dowd stated that they don't have a firm timeline, but for school personnel they are looking at late February to early March. For the Pfizer vaccine, it is 21 days for the second dose and Moderna vaccine is 28 days for the second dose.
- Dr. Pascarella stated we will try to really make the case to “jump at the head of the line” to get a better chance to have a safer environment and get our students back into school.
- AIS/Westside Lottery
 - K. Walston stated that Dr. LaBanca and J. Blue at WSMSA have been having virtual meetings with elementary schools to promote the school and the lottery process. Anticipate a big turn out as there has always been for WSMSA.
 - There has been a good turnout overall. The Board should be aware that we are down 150-160 applications from previous years at AIS. Feels like there are still enough applications to fill the seats but numbers are in fact down.
 - Principal at AIS continues to do a good job recruiting.
 - 17 applications from non-partner schools. 72 in total between partner and non-partner schools. 555 applications from Danbury. 627 in total applications.
 - In a couple weeks, families will start receiving communication and informing them of their place in the lottery.
 - R. Jannelli asked about the 150-160 decline. Is that a grand total out of district and Danbury or just Danbury. K. Walston stated that it was down on both sides so the 150-160 was in total.
 - R. Jannelli stated that in terms of the budget, this affects our budget as well.
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that the lottery is not run at the district, an organization runs the lottery.
 - G. Cooper asked for the information on the lottery to please be forwarded to the Board members in terms of last years and this year's numbers.
 - C. Leborious stated that she will include that information as part of the Board packet and budget.
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that we have to maintain the 70/30 proportion. If for some reason we don't, we have a year to mitigate.
 - K. Walston stated that these are new applications. The heaviest number of applications were in K-2. We are not starting from scratch. All of these applications are backfilling seats for students who are leaving for middle school. The numbers are down but this doesn't mean we will lose funding. If the out of town applicants accept seats we should continue to be in the 70/30 range.
- Building Facility Update
 - Will try to have a meeting on 2/3/2021 with the City to discuss the projects at Osborne and Granville. Plan to backfill with Sacred Heart. This is a year by year lease which would work out for the Registration Center and A Mead's staff. Also have the Summit going forward. Working with the Board in terms of Ed Specs for that environment.
 - The Board will have decisions to make on how to fill that building. It will be expensive. It will be grades 6-12 with 1,200 students. This is exciting and challenging.

- One of the proposals the City was looking at was building an early childhood center over Great Plain School so Dr. Pascarella will also ask them to discuss that. A lot of things to discuss with Building and Facilities.
- J. Britton stated that the meeting looks good just waiting to finalize the agenda. Will be held at 6pm.
- CAPPS Blueprint to Transform Connecticut Public Schools 21-11(pg.27)
 - Dr. Pascarella asked Board members to take time to look at the CAPPS blueprint. 30 points that discuss how education in Connecticut can come up in a way that will be much more equitable.
 - ECS funding over a 15 year period to increase by 2.5%.
 - Ways to recruit teachers.
 - Work on SEL assistance for districts
 - School improvement grants.
 - Collapsing some grants and making it easier for alliance districts (which DPS is).
 - Funding SpEd.
 - Focusing on ELL as it is the fastest growing population in the state.
 - Ways to reduce the number of assessments.
 - Dr. Pascarella's only dilemma is he doesn't want this to interfere with the allocation to get the right funding. In fact, DPS has asked for an acceleration of that.
 - Any questions can be directed to Dr. Pascarella. He is sure CAPPS and CAGE will have some workshops on this as well.
- Dr. Pascarella attended a legislative meeting on 1/27/2021.
 - Presented the draft the Board looked at, which was similar to last year's.
 - There are two members from our delegation on the committee. They expressed their support for our programming and funding.
 - Discussed the vaccine and how to figure out prioritizing communities who have been challenged with Covid cases.
 - G. Cooper felt it was a good meeting discussing the current concerns and working together to make sure that we move our district forward and in the right direction.
 - K. Truchsess stated that she was appreciative of the time and she is listening to Danbury's needs and concerns. There were a lot of insightful questions and gained a lot of knowledge to help keep informed and doing what they need to do to move forward.

DISCUSSION

- Open Choice Enrollment/Proposed House Bill 21-12(pg.42)
 - There is a Bill proposal for Open Choice. The information is just coming through.
 - It does speak to ways of filling the buildings in the western part of the state that may need enrollment. It is a voluntary program and not required. There are some questions about expenditures and costs that the delegation would like clarity on, particularly ELL and SpEd. If it does become a law, they will need to create the process. CES in Fairfield County will manage it. So far the only districts who have expressed interest are Brookfield and Ridgefield.

- Open choice is for voluntary desegregation and to have our suburban schools more integrated, as well as helping enrollment issues.
- R. Chaleski asked if this program is geared more towards the elementary level? She also supports the Open Choice Bill. Dr. Pascarella said he will have to check. It would make sense to start with the elementary but he is still in the process of gathering information.
- K. Conetta stated that she heard from a Board member in Sherman and they had open seats in Sherman. Dr. Pascarella stated that the RES sent out an interest to the whole region and then schools responded to that. The only two he has heard of were Brookfield and Ridgefield but that doesn't mean there won't be more.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that CES is the regional office that will run the program as opposed to EdAdvance who would normally run it. Dr. Pascarella stated that if the Board is interested in more information, he will invite them to come do a presentation to the Board.
- G. Cooper stated that she is curious about the grade levels and bus drives and length. Currently, parents have concerns when their children are on a bus for long periods of time just in Danbury. How will the parents feel with children being on a bus from Danbury to Ridgefield or Brookfield? A presentation would be good to understand how this would benefit our students, not just looking at filling space and moving some of our students into surrounding areas. There is still a lot of unknown about this.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that he can ask the executive director for the program to come give a presentation to the Board. This program hasn't expanded for years because it hasn't been funded so there is a lot of unknown.
- Reopening of Schools, Extended Learning Program
 - A. Mead stated that ELP operates in all elementary schools in the AM and PM. Operates in the middle schools in the PM. The program had to furlough staff this Fall. HR has worked with bringing them back. Because of the earlier hours schools are dismissing, teachers and paras have to contractually stay in their buildings so they can not work for ELP. Recruiting more people to come in and staff those programs. Next week will open two or three schools. Following all the safety protocols that schools have implemented. Focus is to continue to recruit staff. Have reached out to safety advocates and lunch staff. Applications are available in Applitrack, Indeed, social media and working with colleges as well. Hours are from 7-8:30 am and/or 12:30 - 6 pm. Anyone interested can apply to the above mentioned websites or contact A. Mead directly with questions. Full intent to get the ELP program running for our families and keep them in the learning mode.

INFORMATION

- K. O'Dowd:
 - Very confident with the mitigation strategies in place.
 - Every school has an isolation room prepared to use if necessary. Have asked parents to be available to pick up the child within 30 minutes if needed.
 - Nurses have all been trained in contact tracing.
 - Plenty of PPE, schools are well supplied.

- When a case is identified, there is a direct contact notification. Identify who has been a close contact of that positive person and a procedure is in place as far as collaborating with the nurses and principals and how that message goes out to parents and to staff who have been determined to be close contact. In addition to that, there will be a general identification letter that goes out to school staff and community informing them that there has been a case. Let's them know that direct contacts have been notified and it is just for their information.
- A Covid-19 dashboard is housed on the DPS website homepage on the right hand side. That will be updated within 24-48 hours of notified cases. Will tell the individual school, if there is a case, if close contacts have been identified and how many people in quarantine. We want to be transparent and offer the public the information to see the cases but we do not identify if it is a student or staff member due to protecting the privacy of individuals who do have Covid.
- J. DaSilva stated that the dashboard doesn't look updated since 1/24/2021. Have there been further cases since then? K. O'Dowd stated that there have been but it hasn't been updated because of the time it has taken to investigate the cases and take care of the priority of notifying the direct contacts and general school community. It will usually be updated in the evenings.
- J. DaSilva asked how many people are currently quarantined? K. O'Dowd stated that since we reopened, we have had four quarantines. They have been classrooms. 70 individuals in total.
- J. DaSilva asked if we are seeing students coming to school sick? Are they coming to school while someone is sick in the household? K. O'Dowd stated that there have been some who have come to school sick. As soon as the teacher identifies the child appears to be ill, they go right to the school nurse and the appropriate action is taken for the parent to pick the child up. Once a nurse becomes aware that someone at home is sick, we start investigating that. We are asking if there is an ill family member, everyone in that family remains at home until Covid tests have been conducted.
- K. Thompson:
 - Struggling with providing enough support to K. O'Dowd and have a handle on when we have employees calling in with absences, do we need to triage them to see if it's an ordinary absence or Covid related absence?
 - Last week, the HR team sent out flow charts to staff. Walks staff through a series of steps on how to create an absence, particularly if it is Covid related. The flow chart links to a Google form that staff are asked to complete with the contact information and other generic questions. Feeds directly to K. O'Dowd so she can see it and start triaging contact tracing piece. That also feeds into HR so they can make sure there are appropriate coverages.
 - Dramatically reduced numbers of resources from which to draw in order to cover classes if a staff member is out. Working with administrators and secretaries across the district to ensure that they have a plan known to the building administrator and their second person in charge on how classes will be covered in the event that there are a high number of absences.
 - Asked building numbers to give a trigger number on what the number of teacher absences in a day that they can comfortably handle by moving some staff around.

That information has gone to M. Bang in HR who coordinates Aesop coverages. M. Bang checks in the evening and early in the morning. If she sees that trigger number hit, she connects with the administrator who will then work with Dr. Pascarella and K. Walston to see if there is a way to provide coverage or if the building needs to be closed.

- Trying to have as much information as possible in the event we need to close due to staffing issues. This will be one of the greatest challenges in communications with families on how to get them sufficient notice so they can make arrangements for a closing we may have to invoke because of staffing problems.
- We can't provide that information early in the morning because students may already be on their way to school.
- Working on who are all the available people in a building who can be called upon to cover classes.
- Now that we have had elementary in for a week and a half and middle in for half a week, we are starting to see increasing sick numbers.
- Starting to watch how we will invoke coverage so every student is appropriately supervised. Typically these things happen in the evening so we have had some experience getting immobilized as quickly as possible.
- In the last week, have had an uptick in requested accommodations. These are not staff we have heard from since June, they are mostly new requests. These are some difficult conversations because we are not in a position to be able to provide additional support or coverage for teachers who want to work exclusively from home. Escalated considerably in the last week or so. Trying to figure out alternative accommodations or in some cases leaves of absence.
- The level of adjustment, resilience and commitment from all staff has been exemplary.
- J. DaSilva stated that he heard that in terms of coverage, we may be pulling DL teachers to cover schools. K. Thompson stated that is a possibility. Each building administrator is trying to put together a list of staff that can cover classes. There are a variety of people who can be used to cover classes. Every building has at least one building substitute that is someone dedicated every day to go in that building. Many buildings also have cohort substitutes which could be a couple of days a week. We have been having trouble with one for every building in terms of getting people to commit. There also may be some substitute coverage through the Aesop pool which is sporadic. HR continues to scan the applications for those. Last week there were only two. The next list goes to staff such as some para educators, ELL teachers, Coaches or special area teachers. If we get to the bottom and it's the choice of closing the school or not, it may be a DL teacher and those students go to asynchronous learning.
- J. DaSilva stated that as a parent of a DL student, that is one of the reasons he chose DL, to have consistent learning. He would be deeply disconcerted to find that all of the sudden we are pulling DL teachers out. The fact that they are there four days a week is a significant component on why parents chose DL.
- K. Thompson stated that no one disagrees with that and it is really a last case scenario and would only be for a day. It is a very common piece of feedback.

- Dr. Pascarella stated the big challenge is not the virus spread within the schools, it is having the ability for schools to maintain being open with adults out.
- R. Chaleski stated that for the middle schools the students are limited to one core classroom and they learn remotely for their other core classes. How was the decision made? She understands it was initially for two weeks but how will it be determined when students are allowed to move from class to class.
- Dr. Pascarella stated there are a lot of conversations going on about safety. He is proud of the administrators/principals because they have reached out to surrounding districts in Connecticut and other states to see what has worked and what hasn't worked.
- K. Walston stated that when talking through mitigation strategies about the efforts to keep everyone safe, they felt it was in everyone's best interest to limit the movement as much as possible. This was really about maintaining cohorts in the classrooms in our various grade levels. This gives us the opportunity to see how we are doing and making sure that our teachers and staff are implementing the protocols. We wanted to make sure that all the middle schools were doing something similar in terms of implementing a model that looked similar to the elementary schools. We did not want to compromise our students the second they got back in the buildings. There have already been cases at the elementary schools. When looking at the contact tracing, it is much easier to quarantine a classroom when the cohort is limited in movement. In middle schools, you may have to shut a whole grade level down or potentially a school. We just wanted to get some confidence and get back in the buildings first before we had students moving around the buildings. Understands parents are feeling like they thought they signed up for a regular school experience. It's ok to say we are not ready for the full experience yet. We are taking baby steps right now to protect everyone.
- Dr. Zaleta stated that the middle school administrative team is a tight knit group and work together happily on most things. When they are faced with these situations, they like to work together and collaborate. Some of the middle school administrators belong to the CAS group which has administrators from across the state. When DPS was coming back into hybrid, they asked the CAS group on what was the best thing to do from their own experiences and it was an overwhelming response of cohorting students. The opening up and shutting down of schools is more disruptive than anything else. We are still in a global pandemic with another strain coming out. We are aware of the strain this is putting on our own children, our students and our parents. We wanted to do something that would keep our schools open for as long as safely possible. The goal is to move through the schedule as normal.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that the good news is that the infection numbers are trending down.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that at the HS level, there will not be an opportunity to cohort like the elementary and middle school levels are doing. We will have to watch that closely.
- Dr. Casimiro spoke about the instructional piece.
 - Things are going as planned so far.

- The first week in K-5 was really about establishing the routines of safety and procedure. That has gone well.
- Teachers have been very eager to meet with the students and the students were excited across the board.
- One of the great benefits in this environment was getting the return energy of seeing the students in person after not getting to see them for so long.
- We were able to provide a secondary device to all the K-5 teachers who requested it. That was made possible by the Tech Department who worked hard to get the returned chromebooks from the high school ready. This enables the teachers to work with the in-person and at home students a little more easily.
- Have had a lot of monitors flowing in the district through some generous donation programs.
- Teachers from this point forward will struggle a little with figuring out how to teach students who are in quarantine (in-school, cohort and quarantine). Quick and nimble will be par for the course.
- Everyday there are meetings to plan for multiple scenarios which change and evolve over the course of the week.
- Teachers will begin to administer the STAR Assessments for the Winter. LAS testing has also started and will run through March. Should have some Winter data by early March depending how long it takes to get through this assessment window.
- The environment that we are testing in is atypical and therefore results are not considered reliable. There was some Fall data and it was wildly all over the place. In the younger grades, the data looked better than we have ever had. Come to find out, the students had some help at home with some of the questions.
- As we get students into a routine, universal assessments may become more predictable. Difficult to use a universal assessment in this environment because the control factors are not the same. Testing a student in the home environment is very different from testing a student in the school environment.
- The best way to tell how a child is doing is to talk to the teacher. Those more informal conversations with how students are doing in the grade level curriculum will give you the most amount of information.
- Will use whatever data we can collect to make decisions as we go.
- K. Truchsess updated the Board.
 - Given clearance by the City to open Granville the week prior. Staff quickly moved in and set up their classrooms in a day and received the students the following week. Students do have their masks on and are thrilled. It feels like a preschool center. Staff has been amazing!
 - Currently just occupying the top floor of the building with six preschool classrooms. When the bottom floor is complete in the next couple of weeks, will migrate over the rest of the preschool program.
 - Only three classes to move over as there are a few classrooms on DL right now.

- Staff are continuing to support the reentry of students into school across the SpEd department. Students have rolled with it and are excited to be there. Have hit a few bumps in the road with students that need some additional assistance with mask tolerance and wearing. The staff have been remarkable in stepping in, working with students and families.
- Dr. Pascarella stated that due to Covid, a lot of deliveries didn't get to Granville so we weren't sure if we would open. Mayor Cavo worked with the City and got the inspector out to give us a temporary CO.
- Dr. Pascarella stated with the timeframe that we have, if there is ever to be a delay due to weather that will probably be a DL. Early dismissal may be possible.
- PSATs were held at DHS and over 400 students took the test.

BOARD CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- Board of Education Committees, District Committees and PTO Liaisons 21-13(pg.45)
 - G. Cooper satiated that all Board members have received their committee and PTO Liaison assignments.
 - G. Cooper stated that the PTO Liaison responsibility will be a challenge right now. K. Pompano will be sending Board members a list as to who the contact person will be for their particular school.

BOARD REPORTS, COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMENTS

- R. Jannelli asked for an update of POG at the next Board meeting and an update on the Summit. K. Walston stated he can do it at the next meeting.
- A. Spallino stated that it is important that we can all work together and have a finance workshop. G. Cooper stated that she agrees and just has to have a discussion about some other items with R. Jannelli.
- A. Russo stated that Sites and Facilities are meeting on 2/3/2021. Since the Board is circumvented from the committee, he would like to see the Sites and Facilities subcommittee meeting turned into a workshop so more of the Board can have a voice as to what is going on.
- A. Russo stated that as far as the Open Choice for students, he sees it as a win as long as it is applied equitably. The student can have a different educational experience in another district and the win is a smaller classroom size.
- R. Chaleski stated that at one of the City Wide PTO meetings a Summer School question was brought up and parents were wondering if the invitation threshold will be expanded for Summer School. Will it be offered at all levels and if students didn't meet the threshold could they opt and pay for courses over the summer.
 - Dr. Casimiro stated there are some unknowns due to hybrid, availability of staff and social distancing. We will always offer first our legal requirements to students who are substantially deficient. Last year because it was virtual we were able to expand our offerings quite a bit over 900 students just K-5 alone. We will have to look at a variety of options that could take different scenarios in mind.
 - Dr. Pascarella stated that his dream has always been that students would come and take elective summer school. The challenge the Board will have is the budget.

ADJOURNMENT

J. DaSilva moved, seconded by R. Chaleski, that the Board of Education adjourn its Meeting of January 27, 2021 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:54 pm.

Kathleen Molinaro, Secretary

(Meeting was videotaped)